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SCRIPTURAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL

**ARGUMENTS,**

TO PROVE

**THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST,**

AND

**THE NECESSITY**

OF

**HIS ATONEMENT,**

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BY SAMUEL DREW,

AUTHOR OF A TREATISE ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, &c.

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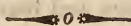
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## ARGUMENTS,

&c. &c.



JOHN XIV. 6.

I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE; NO  
MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME.

**I**F no revelation had ever been communicated to the human race, we might easily have known that all mankind must die; but we could not have known that death would be succeeded by a day of judgment. The fragility of the world on which we live; the departure of our friends, relations, and neighbours; the pains of body which we feel; the diseases incident to human life; and the accidents to which we are exposed, unite their evidence to convince us that death is the common lot of all.

We might also, in case of such an event, have gathered strong intimations that our souls are immortal; for we certainly have less reason to believe that death will terminate our existence, than we have to conclude that it will only change the manner of our being. These intimations, in their combined effects, would have amounted to the highest degree of moral certainty, if not to a positive demonstration of the fact; and would have directed us to infer an assurance of a future state.

To admit the human soul to be immortal, is to grant a state of consciousness beyond the grave; but whether that consciousness would be associated with bliss or woe, it would not have been in our power to determine. One of these must however have been our lot.



Consciousness implies a susceptibility of intellectual feeling: and we can have no conception of any feelings, unless they are either pleasant or painful; and these, which embrace all possible modes of being, give birth and energy to our hopes and fears.

It will hardly be denied, that an innate desire of happiness is implanted in the human bosom. It existed in Paradise; it has survived the fall; it will be renewed by divine grace; and will flourish in eternity. It seems to have been incorporated with the essence of our being; and it is inseparable from human nature in every stage of its existence.

But although a desire of obtaining happiness is a point in which mankind agree, they are not unanimous in their opinions where it is to be found. In pursuit of this object, our "aims are as various as the roads we take in journeying through life." Hence

"Some place the bliss in action, some in ease,  
Those call it pleasure, and contentment these;"

while in the estimation of others, it is

"Twin'd with the wreaths Parnassian laurels yield,  
Or reap'd in iron harvest of the field."

If we descend from abstract principle to practice, these truths will be corroborated by the general conduct of mankind. The miser tells us that happiness consists in the accumulation of riches—the drunkard in intoxication—and the debauchee in the gratification of those appetites which find indulgence in licentious pleasures. Contrasted with these characters, the christian also appears before us; and, in common with all mankind, informs us that he is in pursuit of happiness which he steadfastly believes, is only to be found in an union with God.

This variety of opinions, the existence of which no man can deny, together with the miseries which are in the world, clearly demonstrates that happiness itself is not essential to human nature. Not being es-

essential, it must be derived ; and consequently, man is invariably dependent for all the happiness which he enjoys, upon that external object, cause or being, by which it is imparted. Hence it is of importance to enquire among these various candidates for happiness, which character presents the fairest claim.

I will not avail myself of the argument which might be drawn from the alloy with which all sensual pleasures are blended, nor of that which might be derived from the remorse with which a reflection on the past, and an anticipation of the future, are always embittered. I will even grant that all men, in their various pursuits, are completely happy ; and beyond this, no concession can possibly be expected.

Now as happiness is not essential to man, it is demonstrable that he can no longer live in the enjoyment of it, than while he continues in union with that object from which it is derived. Hence it is but fair, that we should ascertain the nature of that object on which we are dependent, and the permanency of the various tenures, on which our present enjoyments and future prospects rest.

If happiness be exclusively sought and found in any created object, it is obvious that when death shall close our eyes in darkness, we must be separated from the source of our felicity : and whenever this takes place, the destruction of happiness is the inevitable consequence. But if on the contrary, we seek for happiness, and find it in an object that can neither expire nor change ; if we find it in some object or being that pervades both time and eternity, no separation can possibly take place ; and consequently, this happiness must continue for ever. It is therefore unquestionable, that all the felicity which the world can impart, is held on the precarious tenure of a single life, beyond which it cannot possibly extend. While on the contrary, the

christian, who seeks happiness in God, not only enjoys his presence here, but he has the fee-simple of felicity, in rich reversion in eternity. This therefore must be the character which presents the fairest claim to that happiness, which all desire and which all pursue.

But if happiness can only be found in an union with God, some qualification for its enjoyment must be obtained, because a soul departing the present life with all its passions unsubdued, must necessarily be unfit for glory. Now where there is no qualification, there can be no enjoyment; and where there is no enjoyment, there can be no felicity. If therefore such a spirit could be admitted into heaven, it would be compelled to associate with beings whose society could afford no pleasure, to behold glories which it had no appetite to relish, and to be tormented with passions which heaven could not indulge, and consequently it must be miserable. Hence,

“The mind is its own place, and of itself  
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.”

It is demonstrable therefore, that an unholy spirit sinks into misery, not merely by a judicial stroke of heaven, but through an inevitable necessity implanted in the nature of things. From these considerations we may perceive the propriety of our Lord's observation, in that memorable conversation which he had with Nicodemus—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” A qualification for glory is necessary to the enjoyment of its felicities, and this can only be obtained through an union with the genuine source of all good.

But while it is asserted that the christian only can secure lasting happiness, because he alone seeks and finds it in a communion with God,—it may be asked—“How shall this union be obtained? Can God be accessible to mortals, who by sinning against him, have forfeited his favour and lost his image?” To this ques-



tion natural religion can give no satisfactory reply. Here the light of reason ends: but happily for us, the sun of revelation begins to shine, where the torch of reason expires; and the words of Christ to Thomas, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me," are admirably calculated to solve the important difficulty.

It cannot be denied that the character which Christ thus assumes, and the station which he pretends to fill, are of the utmost importance. He appears before us in the character of a mediator, or as a medium of union between God and man. And it is obvious, if his words have any truth or meaning, that our eternal happiness depends upon him. We are therefore urged both by duty and interest, to investigate his pretensions with the most rigorous scrutiny; and directed, as the result shall determine, either to reject him as an imposter, or to embrace him as the Saviour of mankind.

That there was such a person as Jesus Christ, few I presume will be inclined to doubt. The writers of profane, as well as of sacred history have recorded his name, and commemorated his actions. The Jews, his most inveterate enemies, admitted both; although they attributed the extraordinary works which he performed, to the influence of infernal agency. And, among the infidels of modern days, even Thomas Paine does not question his existence. He calls him a virtuous revolutionist, who lost his life between the jarring interests of contending factions.

I have never yet met with but one, who denied his existence. This is Volney in his *Ruins of Empires*. This disciple of Voltaire asserts, that his name is derived from some of the obsolete terms which were in use in the ancient systems of astronomy, and that his votaries have strangely transferred it from the constellations of the ancients to the imaginary person of Christ. To mention such monstrous opinions is to refute them.

In tracing the personal history of Jesus Christ, we find in him a peculiar complication of character. In some places he appears before us as a man, both in name and actions. He called himself the son of man, Matt. viii. 20. Luke ix. 58. and St. Paul says there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Many other passages might be found of nearly the same import, from which we may learn, that he was truly man; and that he was considered in this light by those who were personally acquainted with him, while he sojourned among mankind, it is useless to prove.

Nor will the evidence be less striking, if we turn from the language of inspiration to those descriptions which are given of his life, transactions, and death. It is not to be disputed that he hungered, thirsted, wept, bled, groaned, and died. These are marks of human nature, and they prove its frailty beyond the possibility of successful contradiction. Hence it is evident both from the language of scripture, and from the events which it records respecting Christ, that he was really man.

But when from these detached views, we proceed to contemplate other branches of his character, he rises in our estimation, and the frailties which are incident to human nature wholly disappear. If we view the actions which he performed during the period of his public ministry, we must confirm his own declaration, that he "did works which no other man did," and hence, for "his very works' sake" (John xiv.) we must believe him to be superior to the most exalted of the human race.

It may perhaps be objected, that miracles of the greatest magnitude were performed by men, who never pretended to any thing more than a human character with a commission from above; namely, by the

prophets before the days of Christ, and by his successors after his crucifixion. I grant the fact. But before we can draw any just conclusion from it, we must consider the circumstances under which all these miracles were accomplished. The prophets and the apostles performed their miracles through a power which they uniformly confessed was not their own. It was a power derived from God. They were only instruments in his hands, not agents. They invariably acknowledged their dependence upon him, and were faithful in the discharge of their respective duties. His power on the contrary he declared was inherent; it was in himself. It was not derived. It was independent and essential to his nature. Christ was, therefore, either a great imposter, or his pretensions to that exalted character which he assumed, were real, and consequently, he was the Christ, the Son of God.

1. If we appeal to the language of Scripture, the character of Jesus appears divine. St. John says, "In the beginning was the word." The grammatical construction of this passage evidently imports that this *Word* was in existence, at the beginning. He does not say that his existence commenced at the beginning, but that in the beginning he *was*. The imperfect tense of the verb "To Be" which is here used, evidently denotes his existence antecedently to the beginning; and, in a comprehensive expression like this before us, we cannot conceive how the antecedent existence of Deity could be more fully expressed, if the apostle had directed our views to the eternity of God.

2. It is of little consequence where we fix the period of the beginning; because the proposition expresses an universal affirmative, which necessarily includes all. If we fix it at the creation of man, this *Word* then *was*: if we fix it at the commencement of



time, this *Word* then *was*: and if we carry back our views to the commencement of angelic existence, the same conclusion will hold good; for in either case, “In the beginning was the Word.” Now that which was in existence at the beginning, existed antecedently to the beginning; and that which existed antecedently to the beginning, must have been without a beginning; and that which was without a beginning must be eternal;—and a being who is eternal must be God.

3. The same apostle adds, “The Word was with God.” These words when taken in their connexion with what precedes and follows, can have no meaning unless we admit that he was with him in essence; for without this we must admit two distinct essences; and two distinct essences will constitute a plurality of necessarily existent beings, which is absolutely impossible. To admit a plurality, is to admit that all besides one are unnecessary, because one must contain every possible perfection. Now that being whose existence is unnecessary, cannot exist necessarily, and that which does not exist necessarily, cannot thus be with God. If, therefore, the Word was with God, the Word must have been with him either in essence, in eternity, in council, or in nature: and that person who has co-existed with Deity and eternity in any way whatever, must be God.

4. It may perhaps be objected, that “To be with God, will not infer a sameness of nature, because angels exist with God, without being divine.” That angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are with God in a subordinate sense, is not to be doubted. But this will not reach the comprehensive import of the expression before us. We must not forget that this Word who was with God, was in existence antecedently to the beginning. It therefore follows, that he was with God before any commencement of exist-



ence ; and consequently he was with God in eternity. Now no person can be with God in eternity, or before all commencement of existence, without partaking of the divine essence, and he who is with God in essence must be God.

5. This is a conclusion which perfectly coincides with the next expression, for the same apostle furthermore informs us, not only that the Word was in the beginning, and was with God, but that the Word actually "was God." No words can be more expressive than those before us. No comment can render them more evident. Now he who "was God," must have some attribute of God, and he who has one attribute, must have every attribute, because the divine attributes are incapable of a separation. He also who was God, still is God, and must continue God for ever ; because the divine nature is incapable of a transfer or of a termination.

6. Hence we may likewise infer the absurdity of supposing this Word to be God by delegation. This supposition carries with it its own refutation. A God by delegation must have eternally possessed all his attributes, in order to be God ; and yet these attributes must have been acquired, otherwise he could not have been what he is by delegation. But these modes of divinity are inconsistent with each other, because omnipotence and eternity are incapable of being possessed by delegation. Nor can we conceive the fact to be possible, unless we strangely imagine God to have created a being that never had a beginning, and then the supposition will involve a contradiction.

7. That the appellative term "Word," to whom the divine perfections are here ascribed, belongs exclusively to Jesus Christ, the same apostle affords us the most satisfactory information. Hence he says in verse 41th, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among

us, and we beheld his glory; the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." In this expression, we behold the commencement of the human nature of Jesus Christ, and of its union with the divine, when he became incarnate, by the assumption of it. Christ therefore, is the only being in earth or heaven, to whom this peculiar character can possibly apply.

8. It must not, however, be forgotten, that the apostle had ascribed to him previous existence, eternity, and divinity, long before he thus speaks of his incarnation. And it is demonstrable that the Word could not possibly have been made flesh, if he had not previously existed. And consequently, whether we grant his assumption of flesh, to present us with a new modification of his being, or strangely conceive it to imply a transformation of essence, still we must admit his existence, as the Word, antecedently to his being made flesh, and dwelling among mankind. And this antecedent existence will afford us another argument in favour of his divinity.

9. But although St. John thus evidently means Jesus Christ, he has, when asserting his divinity, omitted to call him the Son of God, for very obvious reasons. The term son, includes a relative idea, which implies priority of existence in the father, and subsequence of existence in the son. He who is a father must as a father necessarily be older than his son. Nor will it obviate the difficulty, to assert that there may be a pre-existence in the order of nature, while there is a co-existence in point of duration. For no being can be eternal, who admits the pre-existence of another, either in the order of nature, or in point of duration. It therefore does not appear that any being, who is a son, can, as a son, be eternal. The term son, as applied to Jesus Christ, comprehends his incarna-

tion; but, according to our present conceptions, it cannot comprehend his divinity. Nor do I recollect a single expression throughout any part of the Bible, in which the term son is applied to Jesus Christ, unless it has reference to his incarnate state. He who is God must be eternal; and he who is eternal can have nothing antecedent to him. The term son, according to the relative ideas which we attach to it, seems, therefore, totally inapplicable to Christ, when we speak of his divinity.

10. To obviate objections which would naturally arise from the denomination of son, St. John calls him *the Word*. This is an appellation which has no relation either to priority or subsequence of existence; neither does it preclude co-existence—co-eternity—or co-essentiality. The prophet Isaiah has introduced his divine character in language which, also, corresponds with it. He calls him Immanuel, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isa. ix. 6. All these terms are perfectly coincident with his divinity, and are wholly exempted from the objections to which those must necessarily be liable, which are merely relative.

11. It is not to be disputed, that the world had actually existed more than four thousand years, before Christ, whom St. John calls “The Word,” became incarnate. But it is demonstrable that he must have existed antecedently to that period, because the same apostle says, “All things were made by him.” Now if all things were made by him, then he was not only pre-existent, but he must have existed without being made, and he who exists without being made, must necessarily have an original existence; and consequently he must be eternal, and must therefore be God.

12. If the Word were created or made, and “all things were made by him,” then he must have made



himself; and if he did so, he must have acted before he existed, which is absolutely impossible, because it involves a plain contradiction. But on the same ground on which a contradiction cannot be admitted, the evidence is decisive that he must be eternal; and he who is eternal must be God.

13. The same apostle adds, "without him was not any thing made that was made." This gives an additional confirmation to the preceeding proposition. Every being or thing that exists, must either have been made, or must exist without being made. But since creation is exclusively and positively ascribed to the power of the Word, the Word must have existed antecedently to all creation. He must therefore have an uncreated existence; and no Being can thus exist but God.

14. Nor can we reasonably, or consistently with truth, confine the creative power which is thus ascribed to Christ, to the creation of the world which we inhabit, or to all its appendages and inhabitants. The language of St. Paul forbids such a conclusion. He says, "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col. i. 16, 17. Language so plain may bid defiance to sophistry. These expressions encircle both earth and heaven in their vast embrace; and include creation in all its possible modes, varieties, and periods.

15. He is said to be "before all things." Now he who is before all things, is not a thing; for if he were, he could not be "before all things," unless he were before himself, which cannot possibly be. He therefore who is not a thing, is not a creature; and he who exists, and is not a creature, must be the creator; and he who is the creator must necessarily be God.



16. St. Paul says, "He who built all things is God," (Heb. iii. 4.) and the same apostle joins with St. John in asserting that "all things were made by Christ." (Col. i. 18. John i. 4. Now if he who made all things is God, and all things were made by Christ, it follows as an inevitable consequence, that Christ is God. The argument is purely syllogistic. The premises are plain scripture, and the conclusion is irresistible. He who made all things is God, but Christ made all things. therefore Christ is God.

It would be exceedingly easy, were it any way necessary to produce additional arguments, to corroborate the truth of the doctrine already advanced. But those which have been adduced, must be sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind, that Jesus Christ was really God; and such as are determined to persevere in error, will be proof against every argument that may be urged.

We have now ascertained both from scripture testimony, and from rational argument, that Christ was human, and also that he was divine. We have likewise seen, although "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," that his incarnation was subsequent to his existence;—that he existed antecedently to all beginning; and consequently, that he is God over all, blessed for ever. On uniting these two branches of his character together, we may also perceive, not only that peculiar glory which resulted from the union which the apostle describes, but the reason why it was inapplicable to any beside himself.

It is remarkable, that St. John when describing his glory, designates it by a peculiar name. It was not the glory of God, because it was not on all occasions sufficiently brilliant. It was not the glory of man, because in many instances it was too sublime,—it was too exalted. In this transfiguration, the particulars

of which are recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and adverted to by Peter, in his first epistle, human nature seems to be exalted above its intrinsic essence, and even to be sublimated into a spiritual, an immortal, and a glorified state. But in the sufferings and death of Jesus, the divine nature, on the contrary, appears to have undergone an eclipse, and to have been overshadowed by the infirmities inseparable from mortality.

If we combine the whole in one comprehensive aggregate, we perceive the divine nature descending until its otherwise unsufferable glory was rendered visible, by the exaltation of human nature, which became glorious by tempering its sacred rays. Hence St. John does not tell us that it was the glory of man; because it was too sublime. Neither does he say, that the glory which they beheld, was the glory of God; because it was too much shaded. On the contrary, it was the glory of both united. It was a glory peculiar to Christ in his mediatorial character. It was "the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth." It was a peculiar glory, which nothing either in earth or heaven can possibly resemble.

This great and glorious personage, to whose character our views have been directed, we are furthermore told, is "the way, the truth and the life." In each of these respects he may be contemplated in many lights. We are personally interested in all. But the order of the propositions directs us first to consider Christ as the way unto the father, and to eternal glory.

1. If we survey his gospel, it presents to us a glorious plan of salvation, such as no human ingenuity could either discover or devise. It had indeed, been gradually unfolding through the patriarchal and prophetic ages; but the life and immortality which the gospel brought fully to light, were only seen as through a glass darkly. Nevertheless, even under these ob-

secure dispensations, the light which it imparted, was as much superior to that which guided the philosophers and ethical writers of the heathen world, who were without its influence, as the brilliancy of the moon, when shining in all her splendor, is to the dim twinkling of a star. In the mean while, it was, in a manner, hidden from the wise and prudent, and couched under ceremonies, types, and shadows, which were better calculated to raise expectation than to gratify it. All these things had a future aspect; and they directed the believers of those days, to anticipate a brighter dispensation, and a more refulgent light. When, therefore, the deliverer came out of Zion, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob—when Christ made his personal appearance, and developed more fully the plan of redemption and of salvation in his gospel;—it might be said—that the sun of righteousness arose with healing under his wings, to enlighten, to enliven, and to fertilize the moral world. Through this gospel he has shewn us the way to happiness and God.

2. If we turn from the plan of salvation, which is unfolded in the gospel, to the various doctrines which it contains, we shall discover additional reason to conclude that Christ is the way to heaven. The gospel, from first to last, is a dispensation of mercy. It originated in the bosom of the deity; and in its sacred influences it is thus manifested to mankind. It declares man to be a guilty creature, under sentence of condemnation by the law, by the deeds of which it is impossible that he can be justified; and yet it offers pardon to the penitent, and points out the rational grounds on which God, consistently with his attributes, can reconcile sinners unto himself. These doctrines declare, that repentance, faith, and holiness, although by no means meritorious, are essentially necessary to salvation; and that they must be wrought in the soul by super-



natural agency, the source of which they clearly unfold. They teach us to exercise the grace which is given, and to be co-workers together with God, that we may be qualified for the enjoyment of that felicity which is solely his gift through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. Nor can we contemplate the precepts of the gospel, which seem to be interwoven with the constitution of its doctrines, without being led to the same conclusion, that Christ is the way. The law is holy, just, and good. Its principles are founded on immutable equity, and all its branches partake of its sacred nature. And although sin, by debasing our moral powers, and by exposing us to its condemnation, has taught us to view it with aversion, yet even the most depraved, yield at times an internal homage to it ; and, by shrinking from its terrors, acknowledge its purity and its powers. Obedience to the precepts of the gospel, is closely connected with that faith from which it springs. Faith, genuine faith alone, unites the soul to Christ ; but no faith can be genuine that does not produce obedience. For as no tree can be good which produces bad fruit, so no faith can be evangelical, which leads not to holiness of heart and life. It is only from an internal principle of grace, that practical godliness can flow. The former is the root, the latter is the branch. And as in philosophical disquisitions, the cause can in general only be known by the effects which result from it, so, in genuine religion, the outward fruits demonstrate the nature of that source from whence they spring. But since man, being wholly dead in a spiritual sense, cannot quicken his own soul, the agency of all good must be ascribed to the efficacy of divine grace. Hence, all must be finally resolved into the love and compassion of God through Jesus Christ.

4. But Christ is also the way, through the provision which he has made for lost mankind. The love of



God is the moving cause of all; and this love has provided the means through which we may escape the punishment due to our offences, notwithstanding we are sinners. Hence, when we were without strength, Christ died for us. Through Christ we are furnished with the means, the motives, and the power to turn unto God; and we are provided with an assurance, that those who come to him he will in no wise cast out. He has provided for our pardon, for our acceptance, for our renovation, and for our eternal glory.

5. But Christ is not merely the way, through the plan of the gospel, through his doctrine, and precepts, and through the rich provison which he has made for returning sinners; he is still more emphatically the way through his atoning sacrifice. For when man had sinned, an expiation became necessary; and this expiation, the principles and necessity of which I will endeavour briefly to unfold, has been fully made, by the death of Christ.

When God created man, he created him with a moral nature. This nature was essentially necessary to that station which he designed us to fill in the empire of existence. And to ask, why this moral nature was imparted, is only to ask, why God had not placed us among the animal or vegatable tribes, or reduced us to the condition of inanimate matter. A moral nature implies a moral law; and a moral law must be charged with precepts, and guarded with penal sanctions. A moral law is therefore a necessary consequence of a moral nature, without which, man would be no longer man; and its precepts and penalties are a necessary consequence of its existence.

But as this law proceeded from God, it must have originated in the principles of eternal justice; and being, therefore, guarded with penal sanctions, justice was bound to execute, what wisdom and justice had

previously established, promised, or denounced. For the same principle of equity, which insured to the righteous their promised reward, enforced the penalty upon all offenders. Hence, when man had transgressed the commands of God, divine justice had a claim upon him as a culprit.

Man, having offended God, and thus rendered himself obnoxious to punishment, could only hope for salvation through mere mercy ; but how mercy could be extended towards him, while the claims of justice remained unsatisfied, involves an important question which makes way for the necessity of redemption. If justice had been an arbitrary principle with God, which he could repeal, abrogate, or divest himself of at pleasure, through any prerogative of omnipotence, we can easily conceive how mercy might be extended to the criminal, without any expiation of his offence. But this is not the case. Justice is as essential to deity as omnipotence, omnipresence, intelligence, or wisdom ; and consequently, it never can be separated from his nature.

If God were to bestow eternal salvation upon sinners, through mere mercy, without an expiation of their offences, it would not be sufficient that the claims of his justice were merely suspended ; they must be set aside. Suspension implies cessation only for a limited period ; and the term imports, that justice on some future occasion will re-assert its claims. But this future exaction of its demands must be totally impossible, because it is utterly inconsistent with that eternal salvation which God is presumed already to have bestowed. If therefore, the claims of justice must be more than suspended, where an expiation is excluded, and no punishment is inflicted, they must be wholly cancelled through the influence of power. But how power can possibly cancel the claims of justice, and

thus alter its nature, those who deny the necessity of an atonement are bound to determine.

It may, perhaps, be asserted, that, "although infinite power cannot cancel right, or change the nature of justice, it may eternally suspend the execution of its threatenings, and the exaction of its penalties." But this is a proposition which will require proof. An eternal suspension, is a solecism in language. A threatening which is eternally suspended, never can be executed. If, therefore, infinite power can command this eternal suspension, it must eternally baffle the claims of justice. But how an infinitely perfect being can exercise one essential attribute of his nature, to baffle, the claims of another, without involving himself in inconsistencies ; or how he can place power in opposition to justice, without becoming unjust we must not expect to know, until we can perceive how authority can change the nature of right. But since this appears to be utterly impossible, we must conclude, that whenever eternal salvation, without an atonement, is bestowed by him on an offending being, on whom his justice has a claim, its claims must not only be suspended, they must be wholly set aside ; and set aside by the power of him, to whose nature justice is essential. How this can be passible, I must leave for others to discover.

Let us now suppose that God, in order to shew mercy without an atonement, should wholly set aside the claims of justice. As this must be an act that is in direct opposition to justice, it must be an unjust act ; and consequently, God, in order to do it, must divest himself of justice itself. During this interval, how long or short soever it may be, he must be a God without justice. Now a God without justice is a God unjust ; and a God unjust, is not a necessarily perfect being ; and he who is not a necessarily perfect being, is not God. He who can divest himself of justice for



one hour, can divest himself of it during a day—a week—a month—a year—a century—and forever. But since justice cannot possibly be separated from the nature of God, its claims must first be satisfied before mercy can be permitted to operate effectually in behalf of the criminal.

How then shall justice and mercy be reconciled together? This is a question which nothing but redemption can solve. As the law was given to human nature in its purity, from which its precepts required a fulfilment; so, when this nature transgressed, it was on human nature that justice had a claim, and from human nature that it demanded satisfaction. Hence, when Christ undertook our cause, he assumed the offending nature; and, in behalf of man, magnified the law and made it honourable, while he fulfilled all righteousness. It was in this nature that he offered himself as our substitute, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It was on this cross that he bore our sins and carried our sorrows; that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him, that through his stripes we might be healed. It was thus that he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Nor were his sufferings merely voluntary; they were penal also. It was the cause of man which he undertook; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. To accomplish this amazing work, no finite being could be fully qualified. A finite being can perform only a finite work. but Jesus, who “heaved the mountain from a sinking world,” comprised in his own personal life and death, those sufferings which it would otherwise have taken the millions of the human race an eternity to endure. Who



then can calculate the greatness of redemption? the greatness of infinite love? or the greatness of those obligations, which that redemption and this love have laid us under?

“But how,” it may be asked, “could God, consistently with his justice, accept the innocent for the guilty? I answer, God must in the abstract, either be able to pardon offenders, or he must not. If not, the power of man, who can forgive offences without becoming unjust, although he has derived that power from God, must be greater than that of omnipotence, which it is absurd to suppose. God therefore must have the power consistently with his justice, of pardoning transgressors. Now if he can pardon transgressors, it must be either through a medium or without one. But if he can pardon without one, he must be able to pardon through one; for it is an unquestionable fact, that the introduction of a medium can never render that action unjust, which was just without it. The utmost that can be said is, that a medium is unnecessary; but even if we admit it to be unnecessary this will not make it unjust. Now every moral action that is not unjust must coincide with justice; and every moral action that coincides with justice, must necessarily be just. If therefore, it be just in God, to shew mercy to offenders, it is just in him to accept the innocent in the room of the guilty; and consequently, the objection against the justice of the action wholly disappears.

But as it is not unjust in God, to accept the innocent in the room of the guilty, so neither can we reasonably conclude that a medium is unnecessary. We know that God must be infinitely wise, and it is demonstrable, that as infinite wisdom can only do that which is good, it cannot do any thing which is wholly unnecessary. The same arguments therefore which

will prove the scriptures to be genuine, will also prove that a medium of reconciliation was absolutely needful. But even if we set aside this argument, and view the question in the abstract, we shall not be led to a less favourable conclusion.

To assert on the present occasion, that a medium is unnecessary, is to affirm that justice and mercy can be reconciled together without its intervention. It is to assert, that we are acquainted with all the possible forms in which infinite wisdom can be displayed ; that all the varieties of justice are placed within the reach of our finite comprehension ; and that we are competent to decide upon the moral economy of God. To this stupendous knowledge all must aspire, who contend that the death of Jesus was not necessary to make an expiation for the sins of mankind ; but to this knowledge none can justly make any pretensions.

But it may perhaps be objected, that “since man can, on many occasions, pardon an offender without an expiation, we have no reason to believe an atonement to be necessary for the sins of mankind.” To this it may be replied, 1. That the laws of all civil communities are either more or less imperfect ; and therefore their precepts and prohibitions are not always the dictates of justice. 2. The evidence which convicts the culprit is frequently uncertain, and those who depend upon it cannot be sure that they will always do right. 3. Many mitigating circumstances may sometimes be urged in favour of the offender, which will lessen his turpitude, if not render his guilt doubtful. The sentences of human tribunals are, therefore, not so much the decisions of justice, as they are of law. 4. The right one which man has over another is only relative ; it is not absolute ; and, therefore, can never fully resemble that of God. 5. As the want of absolute perfection will always render us liable to error, man

might be guilty of a greater deviation from the principles of eternal justice, by demanding on all occasions an expiation as the medium of pardon, than by emitting it. 6. No comparison can be made between the violation of human and divine laws.

But although these are the necessary consequences of our present condition, the result must be totally distinct where finite imperfection does not exist. For where the law is known to be founded upon the principles of immutable justice—were the evidence cannot be mistaken—where all circumstances are known—where the fact is free from doubt—and the judge is absolutely perfect, it will be impossible for him to set aside the claims of justice, without reducing justice itself to a mere arbitrary principle. God is this absolutely perfect being, who cannot act in opposition to the principles of eternal justice through ignorance, because it is necessarily excluded from his nature, nor through design, because rectitude is essential to it.

Since then, we have no reason to believe a medium to be unnecessary, and it can be proved, that it is perfectly consistent with justice, we plainly perceive how God can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. Through his atonement we behold mercy and truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace kissing each other. And, in the harmony of both attributes, we behold with joy, the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers. Christ therefore is the way to happiness and God, through his atoning sacrifice.

6. But Christ is also the way through his example. We have no time to examine with minuteness the various particulars of his life and death. In every part which is imitable, he has left us an example that we should tread in his steps; and it will be hard to select from his general character, an incident of universal application, which does not claim universal admiration.



In the conduct of Jesus we discover what a genuine Christian ought to be. Through the whole progress of his eventful life, he preserved an uniformity of character. No changes in circumstances wrought any change in him. He was the same person when surrounded by the hosannahs of the multitude, that he was when arraigned at Pilate's bar. On the former occasion he discovered no symptoms of ambition, and in the latter he betrayed no want of fortitude. It was the purity of his morals, the sublimity of his doctrines, the equanimity of his life, and the magnanimity of his death, that extorted from Rousseau, who will not be accused of being partial towards christianity, the following tribute of praise and admiration.

“I will confess to you farther, that the majesty of the scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel hath its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers: with all their pomp of diction, how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the scriptures. Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and so simple, should be the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the air of an enthusiast, or ambitious sectary? What sweetness! What purity of manners! What an affecting gracefulness in his delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind! What subtilty! What truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man; where is the philosopher, who could so live and die without weakness, and without ostentation? Shall we suppose the evangelical history to be a mere fiction? Indeed my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates which nobody, presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of

Jesus Christ. The Jewish authors were incapable of the diction, and strangers to the morality contained in the gospel ; the marks of whose truth are so striking and invincible, that the inventor would be a more astonishing character than the hero." Vol. V. page 215—218.

In another place the same author adds, when making a comparison between the Grecian philosopher and Jesus, " It must be confessed, if Socrates died like a man, the son of Mary died like a God." Christ is therefore, from the testimony both of friends and enemies, the way through his example, both in life and death.

7. But finally, he is the way also through the influences of his holy Spirit. Man by nature is a fallen creature, and spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. We are represented as having eyes but see not, ears but hear not, hearts but understand not. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, we are wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores. The whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint. All these expressions inform us, that in a spiritual sense, we are as destitute of life, as a human body is devoid of natural life, when the soul has departed from it. Now as a body that is literally dead cannot possibly reanimate itself, so a soul that is wholly depraved, cannot possibly renovate itself. To admit the former, is to suppose life to spring from death ; and to admit the latter, is to affirm that purity may arise from pollution. In either case the effect must be without a cause. But since this is absolutely impossible, it follows, that all spiritual renovation must arise from some cause that is foreign to human nature.

It will hardly be denied, that all effects must coincide in nature with the causes that produce them. As, therefore, the renovation of the human heart, is an effect which is excellent in its nature, it follows that the

cause from whence it springs, must necessarily be good. And, it is equally certain, that every good and perfect gift cometh down from the Father of light, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. Hence the renovation of the human heart must be wholly ascribed to God. How this is to be effected, we can learn only from the doctrines of the gospel. Through these doctrines we are taught that it is the Spirit of God that convinces the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. This conviction must be internal. The heart is the seat of impurity, and this must be the seat of renovation ; and consequently, all religion which falls short of this, is nothing more than idle speculation.

But although the fact is certain, the manner in which the holy spirit operates, is wholly unknown. When our Lord conversed with Nicodemus on the nature of regeneration, that celebrated ruler asked—"How can these things be?" But instead of giving him a direct answer, Christ referred him for an illustration, in the following words, to an element with which he was conversant. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the spirit." Now if we cannot comprehend the action of the wind, with which we are so familiar, how can we expect to comprehend the manner of those things which are heavenly, spiritual and divine?

But although the manner is unknown, the evidence of the fact is not less certain on this account. Like the blind man who was restored to sight, every converted soul may say—"This one thing I know, that "whereas I was blind, now I see." A change takes place within. All the moral powers undergo an entire revolution. New views, new motives, new hopes, new desires, new aims, and new objects, now occupy the soul. A love



of sin is succeeded by a love of righteousness: a hatred of God, gives place to an ardent affection towards him: and a sense of his displeasure is succeeded by a consciousness of his approbation, and of Christ in him the hope of glory.

But perhaps it may be objected, that “Whatever conviction this internal consciousness of the divine favour, may bring to the possessor of it, it can afford none to a spectator, who enquires for an assurance of its reality. Hence the objector may ask,—“How shall I know that you have not imposed upon yourself, with the reveries of a warm imagination, and substituted the effects of enthusiasm in the room of that inward sense of the divine favour, which you profess to enjoy? That such objections may be fairly made, I readily admit; and I should be ready to acknowledge, if they admitted of no reply, that experimental religion would be clogged with a considerable difficulty. But these objections may be obviated with as much ease as they are started.

The evidences of vital religion are of two kinds: the inward, or experimental; and the outward, or practical. These always go together; and the former is no longer true, than while the latter accompanies it. Behold then some individual character who professes to be born of God. Compare this man with what he was, some months, or perhaps only a few week since. Then he was a drunkard, now he is sober; then he was a swearer, now his lips proclaim for God. Then he hated the people, the ways, the ordinances,—and neglected the word of God; but now he loves all, shuns every evil way, abandons his former companions, associates with all such as excel in virtue, walks in obedience to the commands of God, and seeks after a growing conformity to Christ, and a meetness for eternal glory.

Here then is an evident change, not merely in his profession, but in his life and actions. The internal part is hidden, but the external is open to popular observation; so that those who question his sincerity, are half inclined to say he hath been with Jesus. It is certain that this change must have arisen from some cause. It cannot be from corrupted nature, for we have already concluded, that nothing which is wholly polluted can renovate itself. It cannot be from a bad cause, for a bad cause cannot produce a good effect. It can then only arise from a good cause, and this will carry our views to God. If it should still be asserted, that all is nothing more than the result of enthusiasm; the objector should beware, lest the charge of enthusiasm be retorted on himself. If enthusiasm can produce effects like these; prudence, interest, reason with all that is valuable to man, should urge us to cherish, rather than suppress it. If this be all delusion, "what truth on earth so precious as the lie!"

As the outward action cannot be controverted, we have all the evidence which reason can direct us to expect, that it springs from that inward principle which he professes to enjoy. It is from this sacred principle, that practical godliness always flows. Every professor is therefore worthy of credit, when he has his fruit unto holiness; and of all such the end shall be everlasting life.

We must not however conclude, that either our inward experience, or our outward conformity to the law of God, or both together, can procure for us a title to heaven. This arises solely from the mercy of God, through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. The title is bestowed upon us; experimental religion is wrought within us; and practical godliness flows from it. The merits of Christ alone procure the former, for all who have genuine faith in him; and all religion

that is experimental and practical, constitutes a qualification for the heavenly inheritance. Both the title and the qualification, are essentially necessary to form the christian character ; and whosoever is found destitute of either, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. To separate them from each other, is however, absolutely impossible. Wherever this is a title, it leads to a qualification, with as much certainty as light and heat proceed from the sun when it shines. And he who professes to have a title to heaven, while he is destitute of all qualification for it, has substituted Antinomian credulity in the room of christian faith. Christ, who is the way to the Father, is only so through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.

But Christ who is the way, declares himself also to be "the truth." It would seem from this expression, as though truth itself were embodied in his person. And no doubt can be entertained, that truth is essential to his nature. We have already concluded that Christ is God, and as such he must be perfect. Now a perfect being cannot err; and he who cannot err, can neither do nor say any thing that is wrong; and consequently, he can find neither inducement nor occasion to falsify his word. Truth therefore must be essential to the nature of that being who cannot possibly deviate from it.

But he is also the truth, as he stands contrasted with the ceremonies of the ancient Jewish ritual. They were types; he is the antitype. They were shadows of good things to come; he is the substance. They were allusive; he is the reality. They excited expectation; but he has gratified the wishes of all who waited for his coming. If therefore Christ be not God, he must have been an imposter, and if he be an imposter, the Bible is a cheat.

He is likewise the truth, in opposition to all the fab-



ulous deities of the pantheon. These were at best nothing more than

“ Gods hateful, changeful, passionate, unjust,  
Whose attributes were rage, revenge or lust.”

And if we view them on the darker side, they were imaginary instruments in the hands of infernal agents, who introduced them to deceive the ungodly nations of the earth. It would be degrading to the character of Christ, to make a comparison between him and them. Comparison implies resemblance, and resemblance implies likeness, and similitude, in some respect or other ; but nothing of this can here be supposed to exist, because he is essential truth, and they were embodied falsehood. We may nevertheless introduce both, in order to mark the contrast between him and them ; for they hold just the same rank with regard to him, that darkness does with respect to light. In neither case is there any similitude, but in both instances, the contrast causes the reality to appear with an additional lustre.

Finally, he is the truth, in opposition to those impostors, who have contrived to raise themselves a name among mankind, in all ages of the world. He is the truth when contrasted with Zoroaster, Brama, Confucius, and Mahommed. Fraud and force were among the stratagems and engines which they employed, while they pretended to act under a commission from heaven. But neither art nor power has been sufficient to conceal the imposition. Christ on the contrary made his appearance when arts and learning were at their height. No fraud, no force was ever employed by him ; and yet, in opposition to every hostility, his doctrines and precepts, though mortifying to human pride, and contrary to the expectations of mankind, not only found their way to the hearts of men, but finally subverted the established superstitions of the people although they had been rendered venerable

through age, and had acquired 'dignity from common sanction ;--thus introducing a moral revolution throughout the Roman empire. To what can this amazing effect be attributed, but to the invincible force of truth, accompanied by the mighty power of God ? The instruments which were employed, were in themselves insufficient for the purpose ; the means were inadequate ; and yet the effect was produced. A more powerful agent than we discover in natural causes, must therefore have been at work ; or christianity, instead of attaining its present eminence, would have been buried in its own insignificance.

But the evidences of Christ's divinity, and of his being the truth, become blended in the miracles which he performed. To animadvert on all, would be an endless task. Let us fix on that by which Lazarus was raised from the dead, the particulars of which are recorded in the 11th chapter of St. John. The death and burial of this man are not to be questioned. Christ was at a distance when these events took place. Yet without receiving any information on the subject, he was well acquainted with the whole affair. On his arrival, he found the house filled with a mixed company, among whom were many Jews, who were his inveterate enemies. No sooner had the friends of the deceased related to him the circumstances of his death, than he hastened in company with them to the grave where Lazarus lay. On arriving thither he cried with a loud voice, in the midst of the surrounding multitude, " Lazarus come forth." In consequence of this call, the dead man became reanimated ; obeyed his voice ; left the tomb ; and returned with them to his former habitation. This was a miracle which took place amidst a multitude of friends and foes ; and no one, either present or absent, ever presumed to question its reality.

On this extraordinary event, permit me to state a few plain propositions. If Christ had been an imposter he must have known it. If he knew it, prudence, interest, ambition, hope, and fear, would have urged him to conceal it. In order to conceal the fraud, he must have avoided every thing which was likely to lead to a detection. Nothing could be more likely to lead to a detection, than his making an attempt to restore a dead man to life. We find however that he made the experiment, and that success attended his efforts. We may infer from hence, that he was not an imposter. If not an imposter, he was not a deceiver; and if not a deceiver, all his threatnings, all his promises to mankind, and all his declarations respecting himself, are necessarily true. Confining our observations to the latter, we find him appealing to his works, and declaring that these bear witness of him. Against this appeal no plausible objection can be raised. His character ensures the truth of his declarations; and the works to which he directs us, furnish a proof, independantly of all other authority, that he and his Father are one. (John x. 30.) That he had power of himself to lay down his human life, and power to take it up again; that he is the light of the world; and that he is the true Messiah, he has not hesitated in plain language to declare. Indubitable facts have verified all his declarations, and incontestably proved that in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Hence, it once more appears, from his character, from his language, and from his works, that he was divine, and if divine, that he was God.

But there is another feature of the Saviour's character, which yet remains to be examined. In this, his own language and that of St. John perfectly coincide. The former says, "I am the life," and the latter affirms, that "In him was life."



If the scriptures are true, they must have come from God ; and coming from him, they must have been dictated by infinite wisdom. Now that which is dictated by infinite wisdom, must be exempt from all mixture of error and folly ; and consequently, the language of scripture must have a meaning worthy of its inspiring author. Taking this principle for our guide on the present occasion, we cannot reasonably suppose, that nothing more was meant by Christ, than that he was really endued with animation, or that he was merely alive, when he imparted this information to Thomas. Infinite wisdom can never be employed in imparting unnecessary knowledge. Neither can we conceive that St. John, after having asserted the eternity of the Word, his omnipotence, his co-essentiality with God, and having ascribed creation to him, would gravely come forward to inform the world, that this extraordinary personage was actually living, and not dead when he performed his amazing works. Such contemptible trifling would have covered the solemnity of his former arguments with an air of ridicule, and turned the whole into a jest.

Nor can we conceive that it would be more consistent with the dignity of his subject, and the nature of his argument, if the apostle had asserted, that the life which was in Christ, resembled the life of mortals, either in its nature or its source. Neither can we reasonably suppose, that the language of Christ can be liable to such a construction ; since he has positively affirmed, that he had power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. These are prerogatives which belong not to the empire of mortality ; and if so he to whom they are applicable must be more than man.

The life which was in Christ, when contemplated in its most exalted nature, must be pure, essential, and eternal. It must be underived ; for nothing can be

eternal, that is derived from any preceding fountain, or antecedent source. It must be independent; for nothing can be dependent that is underived. It must be incommunicable; for life that is underived, independent, and eternal, cannot be capable of communication. Whatever is communicated, must have a beginning, with respect to him who receives it; and whatever has a beginning, can neither be independent, nor absolutely eternal. An underived or independent life, that is communicated, is therefore little less than a contradiction in terms.

That pure, essential, and independent life, should be ascribable to Christ, is a necessary consequence of his eternal existence. A Being who has existed from eternity, can have no beginning; and he who has no beginning, can have derived nothing from another; and he who has derived nothing from another, must be absolutely independent. When therefore, we admit the eternal existence of Christ, we necessarily admit that essential life is included in his essence, and that it must necessarily remain inseparable from him for ever.

Life, in every light in which it may be viewed, is simply a perfection; and it necessarily implies some substance in which it must inhere; because no simple perfection is capable of an abstract existence. Life, therefore, although it be eternal, demonstrates the existence of some substance of which it is an essential property. The language of St. John is therefore not less philosophical than it is authoritative, when he declares that "In him was life."

I might here, if it were necessary, avail myself of the grammatical construction of the sentence, the words of which will for ever pre-suppose eternity. On whatever ground we take our stand, "In him was life?"

is an expression which conveys an idea that will always precede it. If we pause on the margin of creation, or fix our thoughts on the commencement of the first moment, the life which "was in him" must be allowed to be pre-existent. And if we attempt to enter the vast region of eternity, and propose the question respecting his existence in this incomprehensible light, the answer "*In him was life*" will still direct us through antecedent centuries of imagination, or indescribable realities, in which we may wander for ever, without the possibility of gaining a commencement to this life which was in him.

I have said that I might avail myself of an argument thus derived from the eternity of this expression ; but no more advantage would result from it, than if the verb had been used in the present tense. In relation to every thing that is eternal, *is* and *was* are terms of the same import ; because past and present are distinctions which can then have no existence. That which *was* with regard to us, simply *is* if it be eternal, with regard to him ; and in this state of immutability it must remain forever. Hence, that life which is in Christ, is not contingent ; it is not adventitious ; it is necessary ; it is essential to his divine nature ; and inseparable from him who is one substance with the Father. It is in this sublime, this exalted, this primary sense, that Jesus is "the life."

We may view this expression in still another light ; and then it will appear, that in him was the source of communicative life. No imparted life is in existence, that has not been derived from him ; nor shall any life exist hereafter, that will not flow from the same source. If we descend to vegetable life, even this has been bestowed by him ; and if we ascend through the various gradations of animal, of rational, of moral, of intellectual, of spiritual, or even of eter-



nal life, which is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, in him is the fountain and source of all. He is the life of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect ; he is the light and life of the world, and of all its inhabitants ; he is the life of the soul when it is born of God ; and will be the unexhausted fountain of its life and happiness for ever.

But although a life which shall never end, may be bestowed by omnipotent power, and infinite goodness, it does not follow, that even God himself can bestow or communicate any life which never had a beginning ; and no life can be absolutely and essentially eternal, that is not as necessarily removed from a beginning as it is from an end. Hence the life which is in Christ, and is constituted by him, is totally distinct from that which angelic natures, or disembodied spirits enjoy. Their lives pre-suppose the existence of his : their natures imply a beginning ; and these must ultimately depend upon him, without whom nothing was made that was made.

No being can impart a greater degree of perfection than it possesses ; and an infinite being cannot impart so much. He cannot impart eternity, omnipotence, independence, or underived existence. But although an infinite being cannot impart all his perfections, he may impart certain degrees of perfection which are less ; and consequently, there is nothing absurd, in attributing the most diminutive perfection in existence, to the power of him who is the life of all.

As Christ is the only source of life, all spiritual life must be derived from him, as well as that which is intellectual and eternal. A life that is spiritual and holy, must either be inherent in man, or it must flow from an external source that is both spiritual and holy ; and this can be found no where but in God. We know from melancholy experience, that this spiritual and

holy principle of life, is not naturally inherent in ourselves ; the wickedness which prevails, and the corruptions of our own hearts, awfully prove the contrary. It therefore follows, that this must come from him who is the only fountain of all. Nevertheless, this spiritual life must inherit the bosom of its possessor, or it can have no existence whatever. It is not of a speculative kind ; and therefore it can only be realized by experience. It is enjoyed by thousands ; it is the root from whence all the fruits of the spirit grow ; it is the earnest of the christian's future inheritance, and his conscious pledge of the divine approbation.

It is from this spiritual life, which must be cherished in the soul, that eternal existence derives its value. Without felicity which shall be commensurate with it, eternal life or existence becomes a curse, and is big with greater horrors than absolute non-existence. But where there is no internal spiritual life realized in the soul in time, there can be no hope of happiness in eternity. Hence, spiritual life is productive of all that is valuable in immortality and eternity ; it is necessary to ensure it : and its importance can only be measured by that felicity which shall never end.

But we are not only taught to view Christ as the way, the truth, and the life ; he is presented to us as being exclusively so, even by himself." "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

There is no light in which we can view Christ, in which his character will not appear peculiarly singular. If we view him as the Word, he stands alone in person, though he is of one substance with the Father. If we view him in his incarnate state, he is without a rival, and without an exemplar. In his life and in his death, in his resurrection and ascension into glory, his character stands alone, without bearing any resemblance to that of any other being, either in earth or heaven, in time or in eternity.

If we turn from the personal character of Christ; to look at the offices which he sustained, the same singularity will appear. He is the only mediator between God and man. No being in earth or heaven, comprises in himself, the necessary qualification for this important undertaking, but Christ alone. Both God and man were concerned in the important issue ; and both natures, the divine and human, were united in his august person. Without a medium of reconciliation, justice and mercy could not concur in one harmonious operation ; and nothing short of those qualifications which he possessed, could accomplish their mutual concurrence. To become our substitute, it was necessary that he should be man ; and to give his undertaking efficacy, it was necessary that he should be God. This union of nature is no where to be found but in Christ. Hence, as no being besides himself, could satisfy the claims of justice, or render God accessible to mortals, it is demonstrable that no man can come unto the Father but by him.

Nor is any other way to the Father necessary. Christ is all sufficient in his nature, his character, and his offices. In his nature, he is adequate because divine, and suitable because he is human. In his character he was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He satisfied the claims of justice, that mercy might operate ; procured salvation for all mankind by his precious blood ; and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. As king, he has established the most salutary laws ; and as prophet he instructs us upon what principle it is our duty and interest to obey them. In his spiritual kingdom, he reigns in every believer's heart, and receives that willing obedience, homage, and adoration, which his subjects render to him, from a principle of grateful love. It is affection and not terror which binds them to his sacred throne.



A sacred being, who thus unites in one person, a nature which is at once divine and human, and who concentrates in that person, the distinct characters of Prophet, Priest, King and Saviour; who externally humbled himself unto death, even to the death of the cross; and who internally sits spiritually enthroned in the affections of every true believer, cannot possibly have any rival in our cool, dispassionate, and conscientious judgments. In all these views he can want nothing to render him truly desirable; because he is the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.

It is this intrinsic excellence which renders him so truly worthy of our most unbounded confidence. Faith in him is therefore not more a duty than it is a privilege; and it is not more of either, than it is the natural offspring of our having proper views of Christ. Who, that has proper views of his nature, can doubt the ability of this Saviour? or who, that reflects on the many splendid proofs which he has given of his love, can doubt of his sincerity? and who can dismiss all his doubts, without having genuine faith? Faith must necessarily shine, in proportion as doubts disappear. Or rather when faith begins to dawn, doubts begin to weaken, and these decline as faith increases; so that doubts wholly subside, when faith fully establishes its empire in the soul. Like light which can alone supplant darkness, faith becomes triumphant, as it causes our doubts to retire. They stand as the reverse of each other. Faith cannot enter where doubts wholly preside; nor doubts prevail where faith holds the dominion. And on the same principle, as the introduction of doubt is destructive to faith, so the introduction of faith must prove destructive to its vanquished rival.

But the condescension of Christ is equal to his love

and all sufficiency as a Saviour. It was great condescension in him to create a world; it was greater to redeem; and it is still greater to justify the ungodly, and visit that man who is humble, of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at his word. Above all, it is superlatively great to purify a polluted heart, to cleanse it from all unrighteousness, to qualify it for heaven, and then to reward it with eternal glory. It is this amazing condescension, which renders the Saviour so amiable and so alluring. In every part of his conduct toward mankind, we perceive that love which is stronger than death; and all the branches of his character unite together, to excite within our bosoms, a sensibility of his compassion, and a principle of grateful return.

That Christ, when we consider his nature character, and undertaking, should do less than he has done, can hardly be conceived, for less than this would have been insufficient for our salvation; and that he should do more, could not be reasonably expected, because more would be unnecessary. All things therefore are now ready; nothing is deficient; nothing is redundant. His character is developed; his atonement is made; his justice is satisfied; his mercy is extended towards us; his gospel is preached; his arms are open to receive sinners; his salvation is offered to mankind; and he now waits our acceptance of his great salvation. Reason, revelation, danger, duty, interest, and gratitude, call upon us to turn unto God, and those to whom these powerful motives plead in vain, will not be persuaded, though one were to rise from the dead.

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